1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

mans and ruled it after World War I as a League of Nations Trust Territory, (later a U.N. Trust Territory) which meant in practice that it was part of the administrative responsibility of the colonial officials in Northern Nigeria. To appreciate more clearly what changes were brought about by colonialism, however, it is necessary to understand something of the social, economic, and in particular the political structure of Bornu, as it developed during pre-colonial times, and it is to this task that the remainder of the chapter is devoted.

Kanem-Bornu: The Social and Political Background

Only the sketchiest oddments of information are available about the nature of Kanem society. One Arabic record speaks of its capital as a city of tents, and traditions tell of a "Council of Nobles" that had a great deal of power over decision-making by the king, or Mai as he was called. From this and a few other data, such as the emphasis placed on the clan membership of persons mentioned in the early periods of the dynastic lists, we can attempt a reconstruction that fits the facts. The early kingdom seems to have been made up of patrilineal, named clans under senior or noble lineages (also named) whose heads formed the so-called "Council of Nobles" under the king or Mai. The Mai himself was head of the senior lineage of a senior clan considered to be the most important or powerful in the region. In all probability the term "Mai" or "king" was used for all leaders of clans just as it is today among some of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Sahara to the north of Lake Chad who are closely related to the Kanuri. It also appears that the great Kanuri king lists are just what local people say they are—lists of the leaders of the Magumi Sefuwa or Sefuwa lineage heads of the Magumi clan. People in the clan considered themselves related by ties of descent to a common ancestor; but they could not describe the exact link with him, while they could describe the genealogical ties through men that made them all Sefuwa. Very probably these people utilized both cattle and domesticated plants although their early city of tents, referred to by Arabic historians, also suggests a greater emphasis on nomadism and the use of cattle. This is consistent with the clan organization described above; indeed this form of organization is widespread among nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples in the Sahara, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia. Later, as attested by the ruins at Garamoulé northwest of Lake Chad they probably built more permanent settlements and very likely used slaves from the south of Lake Chad as trade goods and as agricultural laborers.

How centralized and developed the early stages of the Kanem state really were is an intriguing and difficult question and one that can be solved only by extensive historical and archaeological research. Certainly concepts of statecraft from Islamic areas to the north of the desert and trips by Kanem monarchs to Mecca would have acquainted the rulers with the ideas of very highly centralized states. How much this actually affected Bornu is unknown, although it is possible that tensions over the power of the central monarch were another reason for the civil strife which led eventually to the migration of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu.

After the Sefuwa set up their kingdom in Bornu the state became a much more highly organized and centrally controlled political system. The people who

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

daughters of sovereigns were the princes and princesses of the realm. Princesses were often given in marriage by the king to create alliances between the throne and other states, or nobles, or as rewards to trusted followers. Often, one among the princes was designated Chiroma or heir apparent. However, there was no hard and fast rule that the Chiroma either had the title for life, or that having been graced by the title its holder automatically succeeded to the throne. Although there was no special term for royal granddaughter, a king's grandsons who might become princes, if their fathers obtained the throne, were referred to by a special term.

Attached to the royal household by bonds of strict loyalty and obedience were the king's followers, some of whom lived in the palace, while others lived nearby. These, known as Koguna, together with members of the royal family and their followers provided the basis for the nobility of the state. They were of two main types—slave and free—with slaves being divided into ordinary slaves and eunuchs. The slaves originated from the slave trade or from raids made among pagan groups, or from the sons and daughters of slaves. The free nobility came from deroyalized segments of the royal family as it expanded through time and from descendants of nobles. This nobility was the source of personnel for the bulk of the administrative activities of the state. They served as the monarch's personal bodyguard, as messengers, military commanders, tax collectors, trusted spies, praise singers, slave raiders, consuls, and foreign emissaries. From their ranks came the people who bore the major titles of the state. Some of the titles were derived from Islam; others came from earlier times in Kanem or Bornu history. Although much changed in their nature, a number of these have survived to the present day.

In order to administer the kingdom, titled nobles, including the titled women of the royal family, were given fiefs equivalent to what are today village area units. All such holdings were fragmented and dispersed so that no one noble had control over any large portion of the state. The fief holdings varied in size and number per noble and were a measure of the political success of that particular noble at any point in time. The one exception was the Galidima. The holder of this title maintained a large consolidated set of village areas on the western boundary to protect the east-west trade and guard the western approaches to the capital city. The fief-holders raised militia for the monarch and taxes for themselves and the monarch. They also served as an appeal court system for the local people when they wished adjudication at higher than the local level. Thus people could obtain a royal audience by going through the fief hierarchy. The Kanuri also used the widespread Sudanese practice of dividing the kingdom into quadrants based on the four cardinal directions. Over each quadrant was a highly trusted follower of the king who could oversee the administration of his own quadrant, raise direct royal tax levies, and serve as an alternative form of hierarchy between the people and their ruler. The system functioned in this way as a check on the power of fief-holders, since the king could take fiefs away and redistribute them if there was sufficient reason for doing so. Through their own subordinates these quadrant leaders also administered the nomadic peoples of the kingdom who could not be easily worked into the administration of the fief system based as it was on settled populations. Two of the four leaders were always eunuchs, making for an automatically free power of appointment by the monarch, since these men had no heirs. The other two were always chosen from among the king's closest associates, although there was also a

In later generations they often became a separate fief, or in some cases were absorbed into the territorial organization of the original fief. Again, the big lord might also settle some of his slaves in the fief, or he might ask to settle them in someone else's fief, or be asked by some other high ranking person if he would allow slaves to be settled in one of his own fiefs. Slaves delivered the results of their work on the land, and in craftwork directly to their own master whether this was the big lord of the fief or not. If they were in someone else's fief, presents were sent by their master to the senior fief-holder—the big lord—in the capital. It was also possible for the monarch or the big lord to settle holy men, men learned in the Koran, on a fief and such settlements were generally tax free.

There were two main taxes and innumerable smaller ones. Indeed, in the Kanuri language it is possible to denote the meaning of taxation, a tax on something, by simply adding the suffix "ram" to the activity or the object. Of the two main annual taxes, collected after the harvest, one went to the fief-holder and the other to the Shehu. The big lord collected tax on the basis of assessment of local produce by a special tax messenger who went out to the fief and after conferring with local leaders agreed on the tax. All who cooperated in tax collection kept some for themselves, passing surpluses on up the hierarchy to the big lord. In turn the fief-holder always gave gifts to the ruler upon receipt of their own fief-holder tax. Each year the Shehu appointed his own tax messengers from among the nobility and collected a royal tithe from the various fiefs. These men might and might not be fief-holders in their own right, but very often they were not collecting in their own fiefs. Other taxes were annual fees to local headmen, fees for clearing new land, for using new market space, for adjudication, for craftwork, for irrigation (where present), for extending any kind of privilege, etc. The system was essentially the same for the nomad groups, but one related complication should be noted. The people from dispersed localities owed some small taxation privileges to their previous headmen, even though they now lived in new settlements within new fiefs and were required to pay major taxes to their new settlement leaders.

One final point about the pre-colonial political system should be made. To understand such a kingdom it is necessary to keep distinct at all times the concept of a title from that of an office. The Kanuri kingdom had great rosters of noble titles that through time varied in number, numbers of holders per title, and the name of title. Some pre-nineteenth century titles such as the *Fufuma* or lord of the ancient capital city of Birni Ngazargamo dropped out of use. There were a number of men entitled Shettima while there was only one Digma or one Yerima. The titles are honorific, and even personal names which were attached to originally powerful households have become titles during Bornu's long history. Titles embellish a man' political duties, and even provide some opportunities for furthering his ambitions if their past history, or the activities of a title holder, enable him to manipulate the situation successfully for his own advancement. Offices on the other hand are positions in government giving the incumbent rights, duties, and obligations. An office may almost completely coincide with the title, as in the case of the ancient monarch whose title was Mai for probably a thousand years, and Shehu for the last century and a half. Or again offices can vary independently of titles. Thus the title of Digma which was held by a man with many official duties and much power in the mid-nineteenth century had changed by the end of the century, and the man

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

holding this title had very few of these offices left—they were now the rights of persons holding quite different titles.

The economy of Bornu was a semi-specialized one. Almost everyone grew some crops, except a few cattle nomads, but at the same time during the long dry season people carried on craftwork, trade, and other specialized activities, such as providing medical or barbering services, or entertainment for those who were willing to pay. Everyone had access to new land, over which a person might establish ownership by his act of clearing it. If he used the land for only a few years, and stopped, then the land passed back into bush with no owner. Continued long-term use, especially that involving inheritance, meant that the owner could do with it what he pleased and transfer it to whomever he pleased. In other words the Kanuri had property concepts of usufruct or use-right, but they also had notions of freehold or private property in which land could be transferred by an individual after he had used it for a long time, or it had been passed on to his heirs.

The people raised specialized crops in the kingdom and practiced a myriad of different crafts. Each local craft was organized into a craft guild that helped set production and price standards under a local craft leader who benefited economically from his position and tried to pass it down through the male line. Markets, too, were under headmen and all goods to be traded went to weekly markets to which came thousands of people from the surrounding area.

Trade was accomplished by barter for the most part, although several forms of currency developed, which can be called special purpose or limited purpose money. For various kinds of trade, and within limits, certain objects—a man's robe, iron bars, slaves, horses, cotton rolls, Maria Theresa dollars, and other items—could be used. The trans-Saharan trader came to Bornu for slaves; he therefore demanded payment in slaves, and slaves became a kind of currency for this trade. People from Bornu traded south of Lake Chad for iron bars. These bars could be used to purchase anything in the markets southeast of Bornu where they were the chief export commodity. The same thing is true of cloth in the southern areas of Bornu where it was manufactured and where it was a major export item. Cloth rolls purchased any number of commodities from Bornu but only in that north-south trade. Cowrie shells came very late to Bornu (1820–1850) and never achieved the success as currency that they did elsewhere.

Another and important method of distribution of goods was carried out within the political system itself. Political superiors gave out enormous quantities of cloth, food, horses, and robes on particular holy days or special events such as rites of passage, or wrestling matches. On one occasion a witness in the early part of the century watched the Shehu give away more than a thousand men's robes and an equal number of bullocks and sheep. Although one would expect the leaders to give more than other men, they also served as a model for the population so that the amount of distribution actually carried on in this way must have been very great indeed.

Another important facet of the economy was foreign trade. Although the famous trans-Saharan caravans are supposed to have declined during the nineteenth century, by all accounts they were still of considerable importance for Bornu. Into Bornu came calico, cotton prints, fine silk, sword blades, writing paper, looking glasses, needles, razors, scissors, knives, cheap jewelry, and guns mostly from Eu-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

alive (sororal polygyny) is an awesome idea, for it implies the sororate to them or wish for the death of a present wife.

In a few upper class households there are concubines who have the status of female slaves. These act as servants to the wives of the household and are used by the household head as sexual partners "any time you ask," as one informant put it. They are spoken of as being "half a wife." This refers to the fact that the husband gives them one half the amount of everything given to a wife. Generally they are too low in status to compete with the wives of the household unless they are considered exceptionally beautiful, or if they have given birth while the wife has not, and the child is recognized as that of the concubine. One informant very clearly explained his possession of concubines in economic terms. His household, he said, was very large, and he regularly fed twenty to forty people per day. This figure often increased to fifty or sixty on special occasions. The work of preparing so much food on time and regularly was simply too much for his wives, so he always has a number of concubines to help with the catering problems associated with his high status in the community.

Why do men want to get married? In answering this question men constantly reiterate cooking, food producing, and child-bearing. Cooking—to the unmarried man—is a most important point. Men never cook and if a man has no wife he must eat his food in the household of a relative or neighbor who is already married. This produces obligations by the unmarried man towards the married men which must be repaid with some service such as farm labor or running messages which signifies subordination. Thus a man with a wife can create obligation among unmarried men or at least avoid becoming obliged in this way to others. This is not, of course, the whole story. Women are also prized for their work in the fields. Indeed men estimate an annual increase or decrease in crop yield by referring, among other things, to the loss or gain of a wife.

Women on the other hand want wealth, although they often want freedom as well and more power in marriage than the culture allows for. This leads to trouble. But before we go into marriage itself, let us look at an actual case in which a man decides to marry.

Modu was twenty-six years old. He had been married twice; once for a period of nine months, then divorced and single again, then married a second time for a year and a half. In this he is no different from the vast majority (as high as eighty to ninety percent) of young Kanuri men his age. Now he was single again and living next door to his older-half-brother at whose house he was eating his meals. He wanted to take a wife and become independent of his older brother. He chose a new woman in the village about the same age as himself. She was visiting her elder brother who was a minor official in the district court. Minor though he was, his family was well-to-do and Modu was but a country peasant. The woman was beautiful and rather more sophisticated than local country girls, coming as she did from the city. Modu thought her most attractive in every way, even though gossip had it she had been married six or seven times.

Despite the gossip he decided to try and marry her, feeling that her past reputation made her available to the likes of him and not too costly in terms of bride-wealth. Late one afternoon he sent over some kola nuts using an intermediary; often people use old women for such purposes.

175 of the empire. In the latter part of the fifteenth century (ca. 1470) the empire was consolidated and the city of Birni Ngazargamu was founded on the River Yobe. It remained the capital of the empire of Bornu for 350 years. In 1507 the former capital of Birni Njimi was recaptured and Kanem became a province of
[172] Bornu. The site of Birni Ngazargamu is twenty-five miles from the present town of Geidam, and its extensive ruins can be seen today.

During the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the empire reached its zenith. Its boundaries stretched to Fezzan in the north, beyond Kawar and Tibesti, to the Nile in an easterly direction, and to Dikwa and
175 177 the districts south of Lake Chad. Many minor states paid
[248] tribute to Bornu. At that time Bornu was in close contact with
[487] both Egypt and Tripoli. Controlling the southern terminus of the shortest trans-Saharan caravan route, which ran from Tripoli through the Fezzan and the oasis of Bilma to Lake Chad and Birni Ngazargamu, the empire of Bornu was in regular contact with the
[411] Mediterranean area in earliest times. Guns were introduced into Bornu from Tripoli at the end of the sixteenth century
[179] and became a factor in the expansion of the empire. Via these established trade contacts, Islam came to Bornu in the eleventh
[183] century. With the coming of Islam came also the tradition of study and learning which has persisted as a part of Kanuri culture.

175 567 [439] The institution of slavery had always been a part of this

175 567 839 complex of empire since slaves, along with gold, ivory, and ostrich feathers, had been traded for centuries across the Sahara and fed into Mediterranean markets. Slaves were obtained by raiding the pagan peoples who inhabited the upland areas to the south and southeast of Bornu.

175 636 Throughout this time the Hausa people, immediately to the west of the Kanuri, were under the suzerainty of the empire of Bornu. Though the Hausa are much more numerous than the Kanuri, their level of political development had not advanced beyond city-states, which were under the control of the unified and 175 167 powerful Bornu empire. The gradual entry of the Fulani into the area eventually led to the downfall of the domination of Bornu over the Hausa states. The Fulani are a nomadic cattle people deriving from the Atlantic coast area to the distant west. By the early part of the nineteenth century, drifting continuously to the east, they had become numerous in Hausa 175 721 territory. In 1804 the Fulani, under Usuman dan Fodio, rose up in holy war and gained control over the Hausa city states. They succeeded in sacking and destroying Birni Ngazargamu, and were finally repelled when the Kanuri rulers obtained assistance from the Kanembu to the north.

175 439 The inability of the Bornu empire to resist Fulani attacks was an indication of its decline and decay, and this in turn was the result of a much larger historical process: the decline in importance of the western Sudan and the development of the coastal areas of West Africa. Whereas the Sudanese states had

ture. Many slave families among the Kanuri today were originally Mandara. The Mandara live to the immediate east of the mountainous area inhabited by the Gwoza pagans, and Mandara is the lingua franca for the Gwoza hills.

The Marghi of Damboa District, just west of the Gwoza hills, are perhaps the clearest case of a group which, though still identifiable as a distinct people culturally, is fast losing that identity and adopting Kanuri culture. The Marghi, up to recent times, served as a source of slaves for the Kanuri. Famous Kanuri title holders were Marghi slaves, called by the surname 'Marghi'. In Bornu Province they have become entirely integrated within the larger Kanuri society, within the present Kanuri-dominated political system, and within the urban-oriented economy of the area which looks towards the Kanuri capital, Maiduguri. Although older people among the Marghi still speak their own language, it is very common to find younger generation Marghi who have never learned Marghi and speak only Kanuri.

The Babur people live in the hilly upland area directly south of the Kanuri, centering around the town of Biu. They remain a part-Moslem, part-pagan people. The Bura and the Tera are sub-groups of the Babur. The upper classes of the Babur are entirely Moslem, and speak Kanuri. Many Babur have moved to Kanuri towns, particularly to Maiduguri. Often, after being accepted by the Kanuri community, they seek to deny affiliation with the Babur and call themselves Kanuri.

The Bolewa, southwest of the heart of Kanuri territory,

175 Kukawa while their slaves and subordinates administered their
565 lands and collected taxes. Slaves of the Shehu could them-
631
• [567] selves be chimas, and in fact some of the highest titles--
[354] those of Kaigama (a general of the army), and Mastrema (a eunuch) were reserved for slaves of the Shehu.

175 The "knights" of the Shehu were titled lords, who served
631 as his kabuna. Each lord also had his own kabuna, who vowed
565 allegiance directly to him. The kabuna of the lord actually
567 administered his lands while he lived in the capital. Many of them were his slaves, but just as slaves of the Shehu could themselves be powerful nobles, so too slaves of a lord who were his kabuna were powerful individuals in the villages under
[632] the jurisdiction of their lord. From his kabuna the lord se-
[627] lected the most trustworthy and rewarded them by having them appointed town heads (Lowan), or to a lesser extent village heads (Bulama). The Lowan of a town was directly involved in administering his town, in adjudicating disputes through arbitration and in collecting the property tax (haraji).

634 It was said that the chima was almost the absolute author-
173 ity in his lands. If he saw a horse that he wished to have or
642 a woman whom he admired, he could have them simply by indicating that he wanted to possess them. No man would refuse him
[643] directly. However, if reports came to the Shehu that a chima was acting irresponsibly the Shehu could reprimand the man,
175 and could even remove his title from him. Any man could ap-
643 peal directly to the Shehu for justice. The power of the Shehu
642

779 593 Trimingham says, "...Islamic law recognizes only the simple matrimonial family of man, wife or wives, slaves, and their children, and the Malikite system gives absolute authority to the husband as its head."[1] The Kanuri exemplify this aspect of Islam. 779 595 The polygamous family is the sole kin unit of any significance.

779 595 567 Islam further dictates that a man may have no more than four wives, though he may have any number of concubines. A concubine (chir) is a slave taken by her master as a spouse. [554] Slaves have long existed as a stratum of Kanuri society, but only members of the Kanuri aristocracy have concubines. The status of the concubine is recognized by Islamic law.

779 582 With respect to marriage and the family, Islam permits or specifically prohibits a number of practices which, when taken together, exert a profound influence on social organization. Cousin marriage with both cross and parallel cousins, is permitted under Islamic law. 779 58 Sadak, strictly defined, is the Islamic marriage payment by the husband to the wife. It is her property, and is conceived of as payment for her virginity. Though not entirely equivalent to a bride-price, sadak becomes part of the bride-price. As indicated above, virginity at the [595] time of a girl's first marriage is strongly stressed. Seclusion of wives (kulle) is valued. The wali (Kanuri luwali) who represents the fathers of both parties at the signing of the

---

1. Trimingham, ibid., p. 126.

592 565 369 stratification among the Kanuri has been given, but more extended discussion will be reserved for a later point.

351 392 To this point the compound has been described as an area enclosed by walls, with a single entrance gate. Each compound has as its head an adult married male, referred to as the master of the house (kəmanzə fatobe). The compound is divided into fərək (literally meaning wide or open area) and zəgəsə (narrow area). Each wife has her own zəgəsə, and the master of the house may, in addition, have a house of his own. The open area, or fərək, is the open communal area, and servants, retainers and slaves, with their wives and children, may live there.

592 Since the family as a unit has been described above, and it was also noted that occasionally elderly parents are taken in by their married sons or daughters, other categories of individuals who may be found as part of a household will now be described.

592 • 567 [565] Slaves are a part of the household, but since only royalty (ngalwo) or aristocracy possess slaves, most of the population do not have slaves as a part of their households. Those heads of families who do own slaves normally count their slaves in the hundreds. Few of these become part of the household of their owners. Male slaves are a part of their master's household only if their own families performed duties within the household of their master; most slaves today live on the lands of their former masters, far from the household of their present master. Neither master nor slave, under such circumstances,

592 particularly acknowledges the relationship between them, unless
567 the slave should be in the direct presence of the man who he knows is his master. However, the relationship between master and slave determines the behavior of both at all times, when
592 the slave is part of his master's household. A female slave
567 may be chosen as a concubine (chir) by her master. She then
595 becomes part of his household. Though a man may have no more than four wives, he may have any number of concubines. A chir enters into a special class of concubines when she becomes a murshe. She is then given a house of her own, and has a distinct legal status, slightly different from that of a wife, but with its own strictly defined rights and obligations. Like a wife, a murshe must have her own house. A husband spends one night with a murshe, and two with a wife, in regular rotation. However, here the husband has an option--he may spend no more than one night with each murshe, but if angry at a particular one, he may pass her by. The murshe prepares the master's food on the day when it is her turn to sleep with him, just as a wife would do. She also shares in all the economic tasks which fall to the woman in a household.

592 The household of aristocracy, therefore, may include slaves,
567 both male and female. Male slaves (kalya) may be young boys
565 and youths who live in the forok area of the compound, or they may be married men who live with their own nuclear families in areas of the compound alotted to them, and are included, along with their families, as part of the master's household. Female

592 slaves living within the compound as part of the household may
567 be children or young girls, or they may be chirs. Murshe who
565 bear children are freed by virtue of being the mother of their
[428] master's child, though they remain murshe. Such a child inherits equally with children borne to a wife.

592 At present there are many powerful and wealthy household
556 heads who are not members of the aristocracy or royalty. These
565 men, though they do not own slaves, are important men in the larger towns, and their households reflect their wealth and
592 their social importance. Included as part of their household
597 may be children who have been given to them and are their adopted sons. Children are frequently given by their parents to individuals in other households, where they grow up. There are two types of 'giving': a child may be given to a close relative, such as to one's childless brother or to one's mother, whose children are all grown and whose house is now empty. A man blessed with many children of his own will give a child to a
592 relative. Another sort of giving involves naming the child
597 after an important man (the child's chibuna). The chibuna then
557 has the option of asking for the child after it is weaned, or
553 later, so that the child will grow up in his household as his adopted son. A child growing up as part of an important man's household will have many possibilities open to him, possibilities not available to the common man. The parents make the initial choice when they name the child, indicating that they would wish their son to grow up in his chibuna's household. The

592 pected to provide for the larger needs of members of his house-
571 hold--to provide education for the gifted, or to give a donkey or horse to a particular household member so that he may more effectively perform his tasks. The obligations of one set of the pair, the master of the house for example, becomes the expectation of his counterpart, the tata njima. Conversely the master expects that the tata njima will fulfill his obligations
• [567] to the household. In the case of slaves, obligations are more binding on both sides than in the case of tata njima. A master who recognizes his obligations to a slave is ultimately bound to provide for him. A tata njima who fulfills the expectations of his master can expect to be given greater responsibilities, in accordance with his master's position. However, a tata njima who does not fulfill his master's expectations (i.e., does not properly perform his obligations), can expect to have responsibilities taken from him, and less desirable tasks thrust upon
592 him. Should he radically violate his master's trust he may be
571 expelled from the household, and the relationship between tata
464 njima and master of the house is abruptly ended. This is far
626 more serious than merely being unemployed. An adolescent who finds himself in such a position attempts to become attached to another household, that of a less important man, in which he occupies a more lowly position. It is imperative that he be attached to some household, particularly if he is a young man with not enough savings set aside to provide for a decent luwaliram. Should he be unsuccessful in finding another household for him-

565
554
554
577
792
565

so results in loss of esteem.[1] A pious and god-fearing man, among the Kanuri, will have earned the respect of his neighbors so long as he continues to behave in that fashion. On the other hand, a Malam of the Koran is respected because he belongs to a category of individuals which has high prestige in Kanuri society. Knowing that he is a Malam, people will treat him with respect. Should he not behave as Malams typically behave, he would suffer a loss of esteem. In this case, piety and study of the Koran are important values in Kanuri society, so that individuals who stress those values in their own behavior are accorded prestige.

567
565
554
829

The fourth and final variable which acts as a determinant in the system of social stratification is whether a man has been born a free-man (kambe) or a slave (kaiya). This defines his specific relationship to another man, his master, should he have been born a slave, but it has no effect on the three previous variables discussed above. It does not follow that a man born a slave necessarily ranks low in power, wealth or prestige. There is a certain amount of independence in the operation of each of the four variables.

1. Royalty and Aristocracy.

175
565
554

In pre-contact times social stratification was rigid, and had institutional support and recognition in two customs: the

---

1. usage here is according to Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1945), pp. 73-74.

554 Mogorom - younger sister of the Shehu. A conferred title
565 which can be given to anyone. If the Shehu does
644 not like his younger sister, he can give the title to whomever he wishes.

Dogoma - also the younger sister of the Shehu, but a lesser title than that of Mogorom.

Gumsu - usually head wife of the Shehu, but the title can instead be given, at the Shehu's pleasure, to another wife.

Kərjiroma - head of the Shehu's chirs.

175 Next let us turn to consider the Chimas, who had been men-
423 tioned earlier. Since all land was the Shehu's land, he had
631 the power to give or withdraw the fiefs which were granted to
565 chimas. By custom, certain lands were reserved for the Imam.
554 In addition, the Maira, Gumsu, and Mogorom also had their own
644 fiefs. The remaining lands were largely in the hands of the Shehu's kabuna, his knights and the commanders of his troops.

175 The Shehu's kabuna were divided into those who were free (kambe)
565 and those who were slave (kalya). A number of titles which the
554 Shehu granted were reserved for slaves. Among the slave titles,
567 some were titles of kabuna, and others were not. Both of these, kabuna slaves and non-kabuna slaves, could be chimas. The four most important chimas held the following titles: Kaigama (a slave, and the head of all slave kabuna), Mastrema (a slave, but not a kabuna), Yuroma (a slave, but not a kabuna), Yerima (a freeman and a kabuna).

175 The most important Kanuri titles, all those mentioned above,
554
565

175 554 565 [642] [556] [651] 175 554 565 • 567 their lands; they had wealth because of their rights to tax the populace, as well as their access to large tracts of farm land worked by the populace for the benefit of their chima, and to labor in the form of tax payment to the chima. The chimas had prestige which rested in the noble title which they bore. But, interestingly enough, it was not necessary to be free-born in order to be a chima, or in order to receive a title. A slave of the Shehu could himself occupy a position of enormous power as a titled chima, could be extremely wealthy, and would be respected as well as feared by the talaka, the free-born populace.

554 565 592 Lastly, it should be borne in mind that these attributes which determine social position are shared by an entire household, and not solely by one individual. It is true that only one man is granted a title, but he is the head of a large household. The more important the man, and the greater his title, the larger will be his household, including: number of wives, slaves, concubines, children given to him, and tata njima. These all share to an extent in the increased power and wealth of the titled household head. As his own position rises, his slaves and tata njima increasingly receive greater power and responsibility. They become his kabuna, collect taxes for him, administer the lands and eventually hope to be appointed Lowans, by which time they themselves will have large and important households.

2. Slaves.

565 Royalty, by virtue of their close kinship with the Shehu,
554 fall into a distinct category in Kanuri society. For some, the kinship terminology takes the form of a title (Maina = prince), others are granted royal titles by the Shehu (Gumsu). Nobility represent a second category, composed of those titled freemen who trace no relationship to the Shehu. Here the titles are all conferred by the Shehu to a member of a household, who becomes the head of that household upon receiving the title.
• 567 Since the Kanuri recognize a category of slaves, they should be
565 distinguished as a separate segment of the population. However, they do not form the bottom-most stratum of Kanuri society, as might be supposed. On the contrary, just as freemen are stratified into nobility and commoners, so too can slaves be considered as a vertical segment of Kanuri society, falling into numerous stratified layers within the category called "slave."

567 The principles governing slavery in Kanuri society must now be considered so that the above view of the position of the slave can be properly understood. A Moslem may not enslave another Moslem, so that slaves can be taken only from pagan
175 peoples. In former times slaves were captured by raiding parties
567 who drove into pagan territory, sacked and burned villages, and
721 brought back captives who became slaves of Kanuri masters, either of the Shehu himself, or of officers of the army. Slaves were most frequently taken by the Kanuri from among the Marghi, to the south; from the tribes of the Gwoza hills; from the neigh-

175 borhood of the Shari river, south and east of Bornu; and the
• 567 lands east of the Shari. Of course, only pagan areas were
[721] raided.

Pagan peoples, on being captured in slave raids, remained with their Kanuri masters. As noted above, captured slaves belonged to either the Shehu (or the Mai in olden times), or to officers of the army, who invariably were titled nobles, and kabuna of the Shehu. However, Kabuna of the Shehu might be freemen or might themselves be slaves of the Shehu. In either case they could own slaves, so that it was possible for a slave to have slaves himself. In fact, a slave of the Shehu might own a slave, who in turn had a slave. In a legal sense, the owner of the first slave owned all the others, so that the Shehu owned all slaves of his slaves.

Although a Moslem may not enslave another Moslem, it is proper for a Moslem to own another Moslem as slave. Pagan slaves taken by Kanuri masters learned Kanuri culture, and their children grew up speaking only the Kanuri language and considered themselves Kanuri. They also became Moslems, but continued to remain slaves. This is in order, since one may not capture another Moslem, but one is not obliged to free a slave who converts to Islam. The slave of course has no jili since his ancestors were originally pagan (kərdi).

567 The hierarchy with respect to slaves is determined by sev-
554 eral factors. The first is whether the individual, and his descendants, are slaves of the Shehu or the slaves of a noble

175 567 554 (in this case a titled free-born man and a titled slave of the Shehu's are identical). Let us first consider the case of a slave of the Shehu. Slaves of the Shehu fall into two general categories: kabuna and sugurumma. The kabuna are the knights and commanders of army units. The general of the army, and a slave kabuna, held the title of Kaigama, one of the highest Kanuri titles. The Kaigama was one of the four greatest chimas, ruling one of the largest fiefs. He had very many slaves of his own. Under the Kaigama were the Kazellas, high military officers who also were slaves. These were the slave Kabuna, 175 567 644 839 titled and themselves chimas. The sugurumma were an entirely different category. They were personal slaves, in charge of the household of the Shehu. It was a common practice in raiding for slaves, to capture large numbers of young boys as slaves of [304] the Shehu. These were then castrated; penis and testicles were removed entirely. Of a group of fifty or so, aged five or six, who were subjected to castration, it was said that perhaps five or six might survive the operation. These eunuchs (adim, an Arabic term) served as personal servants of the Shehu and lived in his household. The sugurumma is literally the keeper of the key, an indication of his position of trust within the Shehu's 175 567 household. Several titles are reserved for adims. These are:

644 839 554 Yuroma - the most important of the adims, and one of the four greatest chimas. On his death his title goes to the adim presently holding the title of:

Mastrema - the second most important title held by an adim, and another of the four greatest chimas. He is succeeded by the holder of the title:

175 • 567 644 554 839

Shetima Abu Karim - whose title is below the other two, but who is personally closest to the Shehu. He is succeeded by the

Mala Agadi. All other adim are called abagana. Today, of course, the adim titles are vacant, the last important adim being Mastrema Musa who died in 1921. He is remembered as a fat man, with a high voice and an evil disposition. He was for a time the Ajia of Borsari district, but was dismissed. One adim, Abagana Modu Manga, still survived and lived in Maiduguri in 1956. Not all of the sugurumma were eunuchs. The title Digma is that of a slave sugurumma who was not a eunuch, and that title survives today, held by the present Ajia of Magumeri district.

175 567 554

Slaves of the Shehu fall therefore into two vertical categories, kabuna and sugurumma, and crowning each of these categories were titled slaves who were among the most powerful individuals in the land, and account for three of the four most important chimas. However, the bulk of the Shehu's slaves never rose to positions of great power; they served in a variety of lesser capacities, performing tasks of various degrees of importance in the administrative system and within the household of the Shehu.

Slaves of a noble, either a titled slave or a titled freeman, also fall into differing categories, which serve to determine their position. One class of slave is the susana, or house slave. He has been born in the household of his master, usually of a line of slaves who have always been slaves of one

175 family. The susana has distinctive facial scars. The gawi
567 is a slave without a master. He may affiliate himself with a
554 new master if he so chooses. Lastly, there is the slave who
[304] was bought as a chattel in the market-place, a common practice
175 in the days when Kukawa was the capital. The susana is part
567 of his master's household, whereas the others are not. The
554 susana of an important noble shares some of that importance
592 by being part of the noble's household, and susana of titled nobles who were chimas served as kabuna of those nobles, and were themselves powerful individuals. The case cited above of the title Talba, granted to a slave in the household of the previous title-holder when there were no sons, indicates the position of a trusted susana in the household, and also demonstrates the nature of household unity.

567 Upon the death of a man who owns slaves, his son inherits
928 his slaves. Slaves are inherited just like other forms of
[643] property. The one exception to this is that the Shehu may take any slaves or chirs of one of his kabuna, either slave or
567 free, after that man's death. The rule governing children of slaves is that if the mother is a slave, the child is himself a slave of his mother's master. Status of the father does not enter in determining whether a child is slave or free, so that the offspring of a slave father and a free mother are
567 themselves free. A slave says "kəmanyi" (my lord) to his mas-
576 ter, though nowadays people say that "kəmanyi" is said only to
178 Allah. Under the Mais of old, all talaka said "kəmanyi" to the

567 Mai; under the reign of the Shehus only slaves say "komanyi"
576 to their masters and to the Shehu, and certain of the Shehu's
178 free-born kabuna address him in that way today.

576 A slave may be given from one master to another, and a slave may be freed at the will of his master. A man will call in witnesses to be present and note that he is giving such and
[673] such a slave his freedom. This may also be done in a will after a man's death, though he may not free all of his slaves in this fashion as this would be interpreted as seeking to disinherit one's descendants, which is forbidden by law. A man may also give a chir her freedom, and marry her as a regular wife if he so wishes.

576 The buying and selling of slaves has been prohibited in
178 this century, but the institution of slavery persists. Slaves,
[304] or rather susana, are still distinguished by their distinctive
[291] scars, and by their bare heads--a characteristic which is immediately noticeable since all free-born adult Kanuri males wear
[554] hats. The persistence of slavery, however, is clearly a function
[369] of the need to attach one's self to the household of an important man, particularly in urban situations. This has always been a characteristic of Kanuri society, and it continues to be so today. The slave is no longer forced to remain in the position of slave, but the potential relationship is frequently actuated by slave and by master, and as long as each meets the expectations of the other in satisfactory fashion, the relationship is perpetuated. Furthermore the status of the slave was never that

Furthermore the status of the slave was never that
567 of a degraded individual, since titled slaves were themselves
178 part of the nobility. In fact, a slave who is part of an im-
554 portant man's household may refer to "talaka" in a derogatory
156 manner, indicating his own superior position to that of the impoverished peasant farmer.

3. Talaka.

565 The talaka in the towns and villages formed the bulk of the population in the days of the empire just as they do today. In former times they were the talaka of a particular chima; today they are the talaka of a particular District Head.

565 But the class of talaka is far from homogeneous. The
369 primary distinction to be made is between rural and urban
554 talaka. Rural talaka do tend to be a rather homogeneous group. Urban talaka may fall into a variety of types, which differ in
[175] their relative wealth and prestige. In the days of the empire
565 there were wealthy talaka who lived in the cities. Trade had
369 always been important in Bornu, and a class of important trad-
554 ers formed a segment of the urban talaka population. Similarly,
463 the various specialists and artisans who lived in the towns and
[441] cities formed distinct groups within the talaka population, just as other types of specialists were and still are viewed as low-status groups.

565 Since they are all talaka, none wield political power, and
554 so one might say that there were no differences between the various types of talaka with respect to power. However, there

567 178 [554] Slaves of the Shehu still hold the great slave titles of Kaigama and Kazella, and although slaves are no longer bought and sold, susana still consider themselves slaves and members of the household of present-day nobility. Nobles still continue to have chirs, and slaves ask permission of their masters before marrying.

178 565 555 [666] It is among the great mass of talaka that the greatest changes have been occurring. New avenues to increased social importance have made their appearance in the last two decades. There are ways to attain political power today that previously were unavailable to talaka. Election to public office at the local, regional, or national level is becoming increasingly possible for talaka, and there are a number of individuals who have become powerful and important in recent years, despite their talaka background. Education has made possible the rapid rise of individuals of talaka background. They have risen in power and in prestige because of their education, and the specialized occupations which education has enabled them to practice. In many cases they have also been able to use their position as educated professional people to make successful careers in Provincial and regional politics, thereby acquiring political power. 178 556 565 441 Finally, trade with the Western world has opened up new avenues to accumulation of capital on the part of the trading class of talaka, many of whom today are extremely wealthy individuals; and though this does not imply that an entirely new class of people has arisen in Kanuri society, it does mean that segments of one class of Kanuri society find themselves more

GEIDAM

177 branches of the NA administration. Geidam has a Police Charge
178 Office and a prison. Heading the police contingent in Geidam
625 is a Sergeant, with two corporals and about fifteen men in his
648 command. In September, 1956 the Sergeant in command was Sergeant Ali. He seemed to have a good relationship with both Alkali Baba Kura and with Yerima Mustapha, yet two months later he was replaced by a new man, Sergeant Usman. The reasons given were that he had had difficulties with the Ajia, who had asked that he be replaced. Sergeant Usman was not seen in the Ajari frequently, although Sergeant Ali had often been present
177 there. It was not until late in the field trip that the in-
178 formation was revealed (in private, of course) that the new
625 Sergeant, Sergeant Usman, was a slave of Yerima's. Years ago,
648 at the death of Laminu Jitia, the great-grandfather of Yerima
567 Mustapha, the Shehu took for himself most of his property in-
571 cluding a slave called Kazella Kadria. This, of course, is the Shehu's prerogative towards his kabuna, of which Laminu Jitia was one of the most prominent. Kazella Kadria was the grandfather of Sergeant Usman, who, strictly speaking, was a slave of the Shehu's. His own father grew up as a slave of the Shehu, but Sergeant Usman knows that Yerima Mustapha is the direct lineal descendant and successor to the position of his great-grandfather Laminu Jitia, to whom Sergeant Usman's grandfather once belonged, and he behaves accordingly to Yerima Mustapha, the Ajia of Geidam. This relationship is never mentioned by either party, but it can be seen permeating every

177 178 625 648 567 571 aspect of their behavior towards one another. Sergeant Usman comes only to report to Yerima each morning; otherwise he is never in the Ajari. He is absolutely trustworthy, and in retrospect it is evident that he was brought to Geidam to be in charge of the NA Police there because of this. The nature of the relationship between the Ajia and the Sergeant is, of course, unknown to the British administration and to the European Assistant Superintendent of Police, but in that relationship and in its effective use by Yerima Mustapha can be seen the persistence of the traditional social system, as well as the frustration of newer bureaucratic forms introduced by the British.

571 662 178 The relationship between the Ajia and the Geidam Police is typical in a general sense of all relationships within the political hierarchy centering in Geidam, though it is not always possible to see the structural lines as clearly as in a [sol] slave-master situation. Another special NA appointee in Geidam, Malam Jalo, operates the ferry crossing the Yobe River during its flood. This is a well-paying job, and is highly coveted. Malam Jalo is a member of an important family, and has political influence at the court which enabled him to get the appointment. He acts like a kabuna of Yerima's, and considers himself to be a kabuna though his job is entirely independent of that performed by the kabuna. By placing himself in the relationship of a kabuna to the Ajia, he defines his role in the political system, and at the same time indicates

[GEIDAM]

G. Social Stratification in Geidam.

56 178 177 369 Social stratification in Geidam may be viewed in terms of the interaction of three sets of variables. These are: the traditional Kanuri system of social stratification; the social structure of an urban community; and the influences on Kanuri culture brought about by contact with the Industrial West.

1. The traditional stratification system in Geidam.

565 Aristocracy in Geidam is represented by a handful of individuals. However, though they are few they occupy the [554] positions of greatest power in the community. The term aristocrat properly refers only to Yerima Mustapha, the Ajia, for only he holds a noble title granted him by the Shehu. However, Alkali Baba Kura, the son of a chief Imam and himself a powerful figure in the judiciary, and Sidi Momoɔ Yerima's nephew and an NA messenger in Geidam, must also be considered to belong to the aristocracy, particularly in view of their close ties through kinship with members of the aristocracy. Kinship links to the aristocracy, however, are an ambiguous criterion, since kinship is not always the determining factor in succession. Moreover, a number of other individuals in Geidam, particularly among the NA Malams, are also able to trace ties of kinship to the aristocracy.

• 567 Slaves are a distinctive social element in the community only if their masters, too, are present as members of the com-

• 567 munity. Yerima has a great many slaves in Geidam who serve as kabuna and as members of his household. Yerima's slaves, therefore, are important in Geidam. Kaigama, the previous Ajia, also had many slaves and though many went with him when he was transferred to another district, others stayed behind and continued living in Geidam. The fact that they are slaves is not important because since Kaigama is no longer present in Geidam, the master-slave relationship through which they derive the status of slave has become latent. Should Kaigama ever return to Geidam, or should his slaves ever go to Damboa where Kaigama now is, their status as slave might again become active. The case of Lowan Ashek is a good illustration of this. It is less significant that he is a slave of Kaigama, the former Ajia, than that he is a kabuna of Yerima's and swears allegiance to Yerima. This situation may also be seen in the behavior of Alkali Baba Kura to his slaves. In the nineteenth century Geidam was part of the fief granted to the chief Imam, and administered by one of his slaves as a kaiyari. Alkali Baba Kura is a direct descendant of the chief Imam so that many people in Geidam are in fact his slaves, slaves of his grandfather whom he in turn inherited. However, Alkali Baba Kura does not recognize these people as slaves and refuses to accept either his obligations as a master or their obligations to him as his slaves. He has no chirs, though he could have many if he chose to realize the potential relationship which exists between him and many people in Geidam. The

567 status of slave therefore does not really exist as an important determinant in defining the place of these people within the Geidam community structure.

565 In terms of the traditional stratification system, most of the people of Geidam are talaka, neither aristocracy nor slaves.

2. Urban Social Structure.

463 369 565 The second variable, urban social structure, is much more important in defining social stratification in Geidam. Most Geidamites are specialists of one sort or another. In contrast to the village farming population, most of the people of Geidam make a living by practicing some special skill. They are middlemen in trade, craftsmen, religious specialists and bureaucrats in the political system. It is primarily this differentiation which defines the community as an urban community.

463 565 One might divide the various specialties found in the community of Geidam in a number of ways. Specialties requiring manual skills might be contrasted with those requiring intellectual abilities; specialties requiring long periods of training might be grouped and compared with those requiring only a little specialized training. The approach adopted here in dividing the various specialists in the Geidam community into groups which might be compared is to look at the sphere of culture with which each of these groups of specialists is concerned. Thus there are several groups of specialists in

56 177 [554] prestige, and the distinction between slave and free-born.

177 567 565 648 The direct influence of the British colonial administration has removed the legal support behind the master-slave relationship, so that slaves can no longer be bought and sold, and slaves who have run away cannot be forcibly returned to their masters by the police. This has radically altered the relation between master and slave, so that the distinction between slave and free-born is significant only in special cases.

64 177 178 565 By and large, the colonial administration, because of its policy of indirect rule, has allowed political power to remain in the hands of the same segments of the society as previously held power. However, some changes have been made by the British, so that representatives are elected to a Northern House of Assembly and to a Federal Legislature. In Geidam, 634 177 178 565 political power is largely in the hands of the Ajia, who typifies the aristocracy. Yerima Mustapha as Ajia of Geidam is a perfect example of the aristocrat who has skillfully adapted to the changes demanded of a present-day Ajia, and at the same time has succeeded in perpetuating the old social order. Other positions of power such as those of the Lowans, are held by men faithful to him, chosen from his kabuna, another traditional group which has continued on into the present in Geidam. [648] The position of Alkali in Geidam is held by still another member of the aristocracy; and what is more, the Alkali of Geidam, Alkali Baba Kura, was elected representative to the

175
439 There is some information on a copper trade which the Kanuri middlemen carried on between Darfur in the east and the Nupe area of the Niger river in the west.(1) Contacts with southern people although most often channelled through Kano were sometimes made directly in the trade carried
175 on for the much desired kola-nut. Finally, slavery was a specialized
• 567 trade from which political figures had a ready source of income. The slaves were often sold locally through middlemen although there was an eager market for them across the desert in Tripoli, Tunis and Cairo.

175
436 Currency seems to have come rather late to Bornu as compared with some of the other Sudanese countries. Certainly the nobles and large traders knew of its use in the early 19th century, but the Kanuri peasant had not taken up the customs of currency use that were prevalent amongst his contemporaries in other places such as Kano and Zinder at the time. In the 1820's Clapperton noticed that it was not until he arrived at Katagum, on the way to Kano from Bornu, that cowrie shells were being used as currency. Although he did notice that rolls of cloth from native weavers could be used as currency in some of the Bornu markets.(2) By 1850 the rolls or strips of cloth (gaba'a) were being slowly replaced in Bornu by the cowrie shell.(3) Amongst the traders and the upper classes, both Maria Theresa and Spanish dollars were available for use as money and were even seen in limited use in the Kuka market in the 1850's. However Barth's most revealing passage in this respect tells of his difficulty in buying food from the rural peasants who came to market and refused to have anything to
[437] do with the currency. In order to buy grain, it was necessary for Barth to change his M. T. dollars to cowries, then buy one or more kulu'u (men's robes) and then barter this item of clothing for the required cereal. That

(1) See Arkell, A.J. 1952
(2) Denham,D. and Clapperton H; op. cit. Clapperton's Journal, p.21.
(3) Barth, H; op. cit. Vol. II, p.311.

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175
369
433
178

the Districts adjacent to the new capital to take turns bringing in to Maiduguri approximately 10 (1) tons of millet per week in excess of the amount usually brought to market. This was to ensure that the expanded urban population might have enough grain available for sale to meet its needs. In a similar but less spectacular manner each District headquarters became an expanded market town when the fief-holders came there to live bringing with them their large following and specialized needs. Thus inadvertently and concomitantly to the political reorganisation which the British carried on, an economic [565] readjustment was made. The consumptive needs of the large upper class which moved to Maiduguri, and the smaller enclaves of this same class which had moved out to the Districts had to be satisfied. That is to say, new nuclei of consumption were created in the Kanuri state [491] while others were abandoned or made smaller. Distributive channels of consumption and production developed in response to these changes in the settlement patterns of the non-productive upper class and roads were built connecting the District capital to Maiduguri and linking one District capital to another.

175
439
[567]

In other aspects of economic activity, the British quite strenuously put down the slave trade and helped promote the growth of trade from Bornu towards the west (Kano) and south. (2) This soon brought the Bornu-Tripoli trade to a sad end, and Bornu's primary source of external trade came from its position in Nigeria and the west coast of Africa. At first, gum arabic and skins formed the major export

(1) The Annual Report for 1907 gives the figure as 800 sa (one sa is approximately equal to 25 lbs).
(2) An ex-slave trader in Bornu reported that his last raid had been conducted circa 1921-2. He gave up the trade because of the strong opposition from the European authorities which made the trade lucrative but dangerous.

605 play with his patrilateral cousins. As in the matrilateral case, if ego changes his joking-wife, the tiu joking relationships shift also in association with the change. That is to say, these joking relationships may change in their personnel from time to time, but are ordered in relation to the adult marriage rules in each separate situation.

[184] Although no attempt was made to measure class differences in the cousin joking relationships, it should be noted here that several informants claimed that the above joking relations were "unbecoming" for good proper behaviour and they did not practise such customs.

• 567 Outside the kinship system a joking relationship may hold between a master and his slave, although this is usual only when the slave is an entertainer of some kind. Informants denied that it occurred when the slave is merely serving his master in an ordinary work situation. Amongst the various occupations, joking 571 463 relations obtain between smiths and butchers; barber-doctors and smiths; mallams (koranic teacher-priests) and hunters; kola-nut wholesalers and retailers; dyers and tailors; a builder of mud houses and his labourers; a fire-wood seller and his customers; 614 648 pepper sellers and kola-nut wholesalers. Joking relations also hold between clans such as Ngala'a and Magumi; Nguma and Tàra; Kuburi and Tàra; Su'urti and Kuburi; or between ethnic groups like Shuwa and Kanuri; Kurdi and Shuwa; Hausa and Fulani; Kanuri and Fulani; Tubu and Monga; Monga and Bàdde; Kanembu and Wasili (Arabs).

571 602 In the above relationships which seem in all cases to cover an area of interrelations involving potential conflicts, the

582 In almost half the cases of cousin marriages recorded they are first marriages for the man. On the other hand it is quite rare, female speaking, for cousin marriage to be anything but a first marriage. 582 This is due to the usual method of inception in which the girl is promised as a small child to the boy at his circumcision. If the young girl 584 is given to the boy and comes to live with him in his compound then he [304] is more in the position of guardian to her, or adoptive father, and marriage does not result. If the girl remains in her own compound, or in others, the boy may marry her. In either case he has the primary rights of marriage dispensation over her from that time on. One informant described his own experience with the girl he was just about to marry in the following terms:

582 When I was kaja (circumcised) the girl was given to me; she was
584 only eighteen or nineteen months old at that time; she had been
304 weaned about one month. When I was kaja, they gave me a spear,
881 a watch, a ring, a sword, many robes, and a fine hat (the informant is the eldest son of a well established Village Head). Then my abagana (Fa-Yo-Bro) came and said, "Stand up". We were thirty-five kaja boys at that time, all clothed and taken care of by my father; my father has many chu'una (namesakes). (The informant means here that his father had given each of the boys a robe, he also means that some of the thirty-five boys were being totally supported by his father). My father's mother sat very close to me; she raised me as a child. She said, "Do not stand up for your abagana (Fa-Yo-Bro) unless he gives you his girl." All my family and friends came and brought many gifts. Then my abagana came and put two pounds into my pocket, and said, "Stand up", and I said to him, "Yo you must finish our custom." After a while he said to me, "I give my girl Palmatta to you". Then my father's mother said, "We agree with you, and she is now our girl."

Today this custom can be practised any time after the circumcision by mutual agreement of the parties involved, although traditionally it is supposed to be carried out at the circumcision.

587 In the one case observed of a non-virgin cousin marriage the
• 567 informant was a slave of very low status who had married a divorced wo-
[593] man who was his Mo-Bro-Da (she was not a slave). The woman was extremely

587 independent and dominated the marriage completely. A situation she
567 found easier because of her cousin's low status and his general tim-
593 idity as a person.

582 One of the primary functions of cousin marriage is its maintenance and strengthening of already existing relationships. One informant exemplified this generalization by saying that he wanted to practise cousin marriage because the girl was his kirami (younger sibling), the dauther of his Fa-Ol-Bro. Therefore she would never tell embarrassing things about him or complain of him outside his own group. This results from the fact that her agnatic relations, to whom she
(602) would presumably gossip, are his as well. In other words, by contracting this kind of marriage the informant was avoiding any intimate relations with an agnatic group other than his own, and he liked the idea. All informants agreed upon the tougher texture of such marriages. One informant explained that he was marrying his cousin (his Fa-Bro-Da) so that he could maintain close relations to his parents with whom he had
[606] ceased to live. He said that his father, although he could ordinarily never enter a hut alone with his son's wife, could now do so because she was also his brother's daughter. The same thing occurs in other marriage taboos with in-laws. Thus the restrictions on marriage behaviour are relaxed, and the total amount of interaction among the affines is much greater and friendlier while no new relationships are created.

581 In practice, although universal lip-service is paid to the
582 desirability of cousin marriage, its low incidence indicates its low popularity among a majority of the people.(1) In discussing the matter

[178]

(1) The nature of cousin marriage contraction, i.e. at puberty ceremonies, plus the fact that it is mostly from older men that records of cousin marriages are obtained, suggests that this custom has been declining in practice in the last two decades.

587
562 is still solemnized at a sada'a ceremony as at all weddings. With her growing freedom in life a woman exerts a progressively stronger independence in her marriage choices. It was observed (but not measured) that the rate at which this occurs in the life span of women is increasingly rapid as one descends the socio-economic scale, and increases as well with the number of divorces per woman.

• 567
595 To complete the discussion of types of sexual unions, it might be well to digress slightly at this point to include a brief description of concubinage. A concubine (chir) is a female slave who obtains this status as a result of her birth as a daughter to a male slave (karliya); once having been ascribed the role of chir by her birth she is groomed for a life concubinage. She is considered part of the household property, the inheritable property of the agnatic lineage of her father's owner. She may be given away as a gift to someone (without a wedding) or she can be kept in the family of her father's master. Formerly she could be sold. Once she is sexually mature she is available sexually only to her master unless her master gives her permission to marry someone, for example, another of his slaves. Any children she has as a result of union with a free man, i.e. her master, are themselves free, for slave status is determined by that of the father. This means that the slave population in Bornu is reproducing itself only through the efforts of functioning male slaves who are producing children.

A concubine is primarily a sexual partner to her master and a mark of his high status. She is also a servant to her owner's wife who may use her to do household work, carry water, etc. In several cases slave owners told of using both male and female slaves for farm labour. There are no rules governing sexual intercourse with concubines as there

567 There are no rules governing sexual intercourse with 130.
595 concubines as there
[833] are with wives. A man may sleep with his concubine any time he wishes
[841] or avoid her as much as he pleases, whereas it is mandatory that he spend alternate nights with wives even if one is menstruating. Conflicts may arise between wives and concubines if the latter is overly
567 favoured sexually by the husband. A more serious cleavage arises in
595 the circumstances of the wife's being barren and a concubine having
593 given birth to a son and heir to her master. It is known by all that
428 one day the son will succeed to a large portion of his father's wealth plus his position as household head. In such a case the boy's slave mother knows that eventually she is to become the respected senior
[184] woman of the compound in which she is now a menial. Although one case was observed, it must be emphasized that such instances are rare in
554 the contemporary society. Only political leaders from the level of
567 town head up, and hereditary nobles were observed to keep concubines.
595 An extremely wealthy trader, who felt very proud of his four wives in
178 seclusion, answered that it would be improper of him to have a concubine because he was only a trader. Seventy-five years ago a man of his position would have had a score of them.

567 Several upper class informants spoke of the traditional prac-
595 tice of giving young concubines to upper class boys at their circum-
881 cision, so that they might have a female of their own in order to learn
178 about sexual intercourse. Because of the waning of the slave population numerically this practice seems to be dying out, (only one case of a male who had been raised in this way of the younger, 20 to 30 years ago, generation was recorded).

595 When a man marries a second, third, or fourth wife it is customary for him to give a sum equal to approximately half the luwal-

563 829 who descended from the north on settled towns and caravans for plunder and slaves. Even today they are feared for their aggressive and warlike ways. The pagan groups who are most contacted, the Banana and the Gwosa peoples, many of whom live as a despised minority among the Kanuri, are rated the lowest among the non-Muslim groups. While those peoples who have many recent converts to Islam, like the Babur or the Yeruba, are rated much higher than the less contacted pagan peoples like the Mandara, Magari and Tiv, who are in their turn rated higher than the more closely contacted Gwosa and Banana.

Occupation

554 The occupational role which a person performs is a major determinant of status in the total society. Traditionally, as well as contemporaneously, any person holding a political position is accorded a high status in relation to all other occupations. The higher the political position in the governmental hierarchy, the higher the 554 status accorded the person doing the job. Thus the status of a slave, 567 for example, is strongly dependent upon his occupation. In Magumeri a slave of the District Head, who gives the District Head free labour and has no political ties or power, has a very low status. On the other hand, the District Head considers himself the slave of the son of a former Shehu, because his father was a slave of the former Shehu. The District Head's status in the society as a whole is high because of his occupation as a District Head, notwithstanding his slave background.

555 793 Koranic gallams are accorded prestige because of their close connection to the supernatural which gives them specialised powers, and because of the leading role they take in rites de passage. The variation in their status is due to their success (see below pp. 225-228, arziyi) and their birth.